

Department of Human Services

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Articles in Today's Clips Wednesday, September 5, 2007

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Article published Sep 5, 2007

Murder charges dismissed, re-issued in boy's death

Trace Christenson

The Enquirer

Murder charges against a Battle Creek man were dismissed Tuesday but re-issued before the afternoon ended.

Calhoun County District Court Judge Samuel Durham dismissed murder and child abuse charges against Adam Markos after prosecutors said they were not prepared for the preliminary examination, scheduled to begin at 1:30 p.m.

Markos, 24, of Battle Creek is charged in the Aug. 5 death of his girlfriend's son, Dominic Munoz, 4.

Before the hearing began, Assistant Prosecutor Jeff Kabot asked for an adjournment, telling Durham that the pathologist — Dr. Joyce DeJong of Sparrow Hospital in Lansing, who conducted the autopsy — is waiting for information from a pediatric neuropathologist from Baltimore, Md.

Kabot said DeJong is not prepared to testify about the cause of death for Munoz until she has the information from the Baltimore specialist.

"She has to rely on the work of another person," Kabot said, asking the judge for a delay in the proceedings.

But defense attorney J. Thomas Schaeffer told the judge the case history is disturbing because Markos was arraigned Aug. 8 on child abuse charges with a preliminary exam scheduled Aug. 23.

But those charges were dismissed by the prosecutor and a murder charge was issued Aug. 23.

"We are faced with the circumstances that he is not going to have his day in court," Schaeffer said. "He wants his day in court, and he wants the prosecutor to get his ships in line."

Schaeffer said prosecutors "shouldn't have brought charges unless they have their case together."

Durham said since the Maryland doctor had not been served with a subpoena there was no cause to grant the prosecution's adjournment request and the judge dismissed the case.

However, Prosecutor John Hallacy said a new warrant was being issued and Markos likely will be arraigned on the same charges today.

"We are continuing to work on it," Hallacy said. "Sometimes these things do happen."

Trace Christenson can be reached at 966-0685 or tchrist@battlecr.gannett.com.

ClickOnDetroit.com

Man Sentenced For Hiding Drugs In Baby Diapers

POSTED: 7:01 pm EDT September 4, 2007
UPDATED: 7:26 pm EDT September 4, 2007

DETROIT -- A judge sentenced a Clinton Township man accused of hiding drugs in his 9-month old baby's diaper up to 20 years in prison.

Tuesday. Marvin Blocker, 25, plead guilty to drug possession, child abuse and resisting arrest.

Blocker's girlfriend a 24-year-old mother of five children, was sentenced to two and a half years in prison last week for hiding drugs in candy wrappers and baby diapers.

Tanya Humphreys pleaded guilty to several drug charges and second-degree child abuse.

Blocker and Humphreys have been serving jail time for failing to appear in court.

Bounty hunters that work for two bail bond companies caught the Macomb County couple.

Police raided the couple's mobile home on South Keystone Way in February and found crack cocaine rocks wrapped in baby diapers, Ecstasy pills wrapped in candy wrappers and marijuana and prescription drugs.

Officials said the couple's five children, ranging in ages from 6 months old to 5 years old, were in close proximity of the drugs and they were living in atrocious conditions.

"Anytime you have someone dealing drugs, not caring about the damage they are doing to other people we want to get them off the streets. But endangering their own children, that's a problem there," said Capt. John Roberts.

Child Protective Services removed the children from the home in February.

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Meth made in Niles motel

By NORMA LERNER / Niles Daily Star
Tuesday, September 4, 2007 10:50 AM EDT

CASSOPOLIS - A woman found to be operating a meth lab in a Niles motel was sentenced Friday in Cass County Circuit Court.

Christina Davis, 36, of Forlers Motel, Niles, received three years probation and one year in jail for operating and maintaining a methamphetamine laboratory and a concurrent 200 days jail each for possession of marijuana and fourth-degree child abuse on April 7 when Michigan State Police investigated her residence in a room at Forlers Motel in Niles. She shared the one room with her boyfriend, James Owens, and her daughter.

Volwinkle said she was living with a dangerous man in the motel room with her daughter where components of meth making were found in the bathroom.

Davis said she wanted her daughter back in her life as her father was caring for her while she already served 124 days in jail. Her costs were \$2,450.



For Immediate Release
Contact: Rich Bearup (517) 712-1113

September 4, 2007

Children's Trust Fund Announces Appointment of Deputy

The Children's Trust Fund of Michigan (CTF) is pleased to announce the appointment of Janell M. Thelen of Fowler as its new Program Director.

In announcing her appointment, CTF's Executive Director Rich Bearup said that Ms. Thelen will begin her new duties September 10th.

Ms. Thelen is a graduate of Michigan State University, earned an MBA, and is a Certified Public Accountant. She has been in state public service since 1998 and was previously associated with the accounting firms of Abraham & Gaffney (St. Johns) and Stuart, Heins and Wise (Lansing).

In her new position she will be responsible for the Trust Fund's child abuse and neglect prevention programs funded and administered by the CTF under a statute sponsored in 1982 by then State Representative (now United States Senator) Debbie Stabenow.

Now in its 25th year, CTF has raised and granted more than \$60 million for child abuse prevention programs in all of the state's 83 counties. CTF currently funds 72 local child abuse prevention councils and 81 additional community-based non-profit programs in every region of the state.

Since its founding, CTF has never used state general tax funds for its operations. Proceeds for the child maltreatment programs it grants to local communities come largely from charitable donations, such as from the voluntary state income tax checkoff box, from the sale of CTF license plates by the Michigan Secretary of State and from the annual Cherish the Children Auction held the first Tuesday of every May at MSU's Breslin Center.

The underlying endowment for the Trust Fund is now in excess of \$22 million.

"The Children's Trust Fund is fortunate to have Janell Thelen join and help lead our team," Bearup said. "She brings excellent experience, outstanding skills and an impressive record of accomplishment to us."

CTF is governed by a fifteen-member Board of Directors which is appointed by the Governor with advice and consent of the Senate. The Board hires the Executive Director and sets overall policy for the Trust Fund. The Executive Director and Program Director are responsible for day-to-day operations and decisions.

Ms. Thelen and her husband reside in Fowler with their four children.

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Members of the Board of Directors are appointed by the Governor with the consent of the Senate per Public Act 250 of 1982

Richard S. Bearup
Executive Director

Police: Handyman Scams Seniors

POSTED: 2:00 pm EDT September 3, 2007
UPDATED: 9:08 am EDT September 4, 2007

Local police departments are warning residents to be on alert for a handyman who they said is scamming people.

Robert Lee Cooper, 41, is accused of targeting seniors in Ann Arbor and Pittsfield Township.

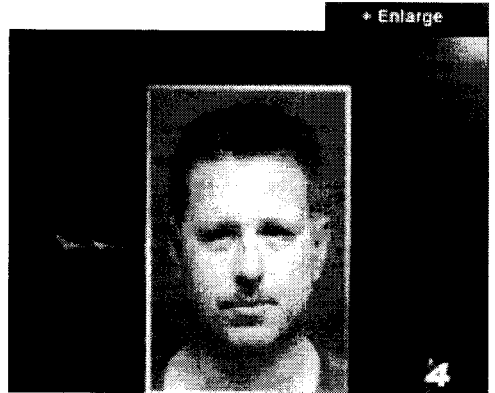
Cooper passes out fliers advertising home improvement services. He targets seniors by leaving fliers under the names "Dependable Painting and Handyman Services," or "Color Touch Handyman and Painting Services," in their mailboxes, according to police.

Once Cooper collects money from his customers, he disappears without finishing the job he was hired to do, police said.

Cooper currently has five felony warrants and also goes by the name of Robert McDonnell.

Cooper is described as white, with brown hair and green eyes. He is 5 feet 9 inches tall and weighs 190 pounds. Anyone with information is asked to call the Pittsfield Township Police Department at 734-944-4911.

RELATED TO STORY



MIRS

August 30, 2007

Child Poverty On Rise

Although national child poverty rates remained relatively stagnant, Michigan's child poverty rate jumped more than three percentage points from 2001 to 2006, according to U.S. Census data released this week and reported by Michigan's Children.

In Michigan, 17.8 percent of children, or 430,545 children under the age of 18, lived in poverty last year compared to 14.2 percent in 2001. Nationally, the child poverty rate has hovered around 17 percent with nearly 13 million children under the age of 18 living in poverty in 2006.

"This is not the direction Michigan should be going," said Michigan's Children President & CEO Sharon

PETERS. "We have far too many children facing the often insurmountable challenges of growing up in poverty: lack of access to quality health care, healthy and nutritious meals, safe streets, and quality educations. Our children deserve better. Michigan deserves better."

Bucking the national trend for the better is Michigan's improved rate of children without health insurance.

Since 1999, Michigan has gone from having 245,000 uninsured children to 116,000 in 2006. The

percentage of uninsured children has dropped from 8.5 percent to 4.7 percent, thanks in large part to the

state's aggressive outreach in enrolling children in Medicaid and MICHild, a state-federal health insurance

program for low- and moderate-income families, Peters said.



Poverty spreads

Outcounty numbers a call for new policies

FLINT

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Wednesday, September 05, 2007

Flint's poverty, indeed the impoverishment of cities across Michigan, isn't something we can walk away from. It's a condition that spreads if not remedied and makes the state poorer, too.

Overlooked in last month's unremarkable news that Flint is one of the poorest cities for its size in the country, is U.S. Census data showing that Genesee County's poverty numbers are growing more in the suburbs.

While the county's poverty count rose by nearly 4,100 between 2005 and 2006, more than 61 percent of that increase was outside Flint. In fact, the outcounty poverty total nearly matches Flint's, a trend undoubtedly replicated in some of the state's other population centers.

Such statistics should not just alarm our elected representatives, they should change public policies to lessen the economic disparity between cities and suburbs. We're not talking charity, but long-term investment and strategies so abandonment and sprawl stop and revitalization begins.

This should be a state agenda embraced by the governor's office and lawmakers, as no public official can pretend that concentrated poverty is someone else's worry.

After all, the bleak statistics reported for Flint, Detroit and Kalamazoo also show that Michigan's rate of poverty rose dramatically from 10.5 percent in 1999 to 13.5 percent in 2006. While the downsizing in manufacturing is a major culprit, no one expects a reversal via an auto industry revival.

As a Brookings Institution report noted a few months ago, older industrial communities must find new economic niches. This entrepreneurship won't just happen; it has to be nurtured by creating environments for economic growth. Specifically, core cities must be improved for those who live there and so they might attract people of means.

For generations in Michigan the opposite has been happening, to where many of our metro hubs are not competitive. When this occurs entire regions suffer, without exception, to wit the new Genesee County poverty numbers are but further evidence.

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Muskegon Chronicle

Donations help quell food pantry 'crisis,' but more needed

Wednesday, September 05, 2007

By Chad D. Lerch

clerch@muskegonchronicle.com

West Michigan is responding to the pleas of local outreach agencies to feed the needy after officials last month reported food pantry shelves had gone bare.

One official had called the dry spell of giving, combined with a rise in demand from needy families "a crisis" while another said it was "the worst I've ever seen."

Cases of soup, cereal and other canned goods have been pouring into food pantries like Love INC (In the Name of Christ) since officials went public with their concerns last month.

But officials at area food pantries say the recent outpouring should not lead people to complacency because donated food is flying off the shelves as fast as it is being stocked.

"People are still in need and they're coming in hot and strong," said Maxine Artlip, the food pantry coordinator at Muskegon's Salvation Army, 2913 Hoyt, the agency's temporary location.

"As quick as I can get it in, it's going back out," she said.

Artlip said food donations are plentiful between Thanksgiving and Christmas and that those supplies are used throughout the year. Food donations traditionally drop significantly after the holidays, she said.

That's bad news for food pantries that rely primarily on donated food to feed needy families, officials have said.

By summer, those supplies dry up just as low-income families need it the most -- when students who normally receive free meals at school are home.

In response to the food pantries' shout for help last month, Meijer Inc. has donated \$2,000 worth of food from its shelves to Love INC's outreach ministries in Grand Haven and Muskegon.

The donation will send 216 cases of food to the two pantries, 1106 Fulton Ave. in Grand Haven and 2525 Hall in Muskegon. Meijer stores in Grand Haven, Norton Shores, North Muskegon and Fruitport contributed to the donation, a company spokesman said.

Eric Morgan, executive director of Grand Haven's Love INC, said his staff will go to Meijer today to pick up its cases of food to stock his pantry's shelves. The food will be distributed at local churches.

Meanwhile, Herman Miller of Spring Lake recently donated 90 boxes of cereal while the North Ottawa Community Health System completed a similar campaign.

Muskegon Chronicle employees donated 70 cases of various types of food.

Food pantry officials said food drives have been spearheaded by countless companies, churches and fraternal organizations across West Michigan.

"That was a great shot in the arm," Morgan said. "It's wonderful how the community responds to a need like this."

Morgan said he hopes the giving doesn't stop there. He wants it to become something people think about all year.

"What typically happens is the giving goes on for a week while it's in the news and then it drops off. We need to figure out how we can sustain it," he said.

Morgan said his agency is considering launching a pledge system, where residents and corporations would agree to give a certain amount of food every week or month.

Specifically, food pantry officials say they need more soup, pancake mix, applesauce, canned vegetables, pasta, spaghetti sauce, canned meats, baked beans, crackers, powdered milk, juice, peanut butter and canned potatoes.

Carla Skoglund, executive director of the Muskegon Rescue Mission, 400 W. Laketon and 1671 Peck St., said she saw early indications this year that demand for food pantry services was increasing.

High gas prices, unemployment and state budget cuts have impacted donations, officials have said.

"It hasn't let up," she said. "We are way down; our food pantry has lots of bare shelves."

She said that can turn around with the community's support.

"We certainly put a plea out for help," she said. "The community has been good to us in other years. And without the community support, it would be impossible because we don't have a budget that can do that. The need is huge."

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Muskegon Chronicle

50 students get shopping spree with officials

Tuesday, September 04, 2007

By Chad D. Lerch

clerch@muskegonchronicle.com

Pressed with the tough decision -- a second pair of shoes or shirts and a backpack -- 8-year-old Emily Carlisle just needed a second to sort things out.

After pondering her options, the Muskegon girl's decision was clear -- "let's just keep shopping." They ended up searching for socks and school supplies instead of those "really cool" dress shoes.

The sneakers that light up when she walks would have to do.

Carlisle was one of 50 students who received a free shopping spree last week at the Grand Haven Meijer, thanks to a \$5,000 donation from the Pepsi Bottling Group. The students were from Muskegon and Ottawa counties.

Each student received a \$100 gift card and shopped with special mentors -- police officers, firefighters, sheriff's deputies and social service workers.

Officials wanted the students to build positive relationships with law enforcement, said Mario Ferretti, a Pepsi spokesman and event organizer.

"I like the cops. They're nice," said Maggie Haynes, 7, of North Muskegon, who was quickly reminded that her escort was a firefighter. "And I like firemen, too."

The children were picked from programs at the Muskegon office of Catholic Social Services and the Michigan Department of Human Services' Muskegon office.

Carlisle's mentor for the day, Nancy Brazaski from Catholic Social Services, said the shopping spree wasn't just about getting children clothes and school supplies.

"It's about teaching them a lesson on compromising and determining what you can afford to buy," she said.

One boy had to make one of those tough calls. He had to put a Detroit Red Wings hat back so he could afford socks.

The students had preapproved shopping lists. One girl's list was two pages long.

"Toys -- I want toys," Olivia Webber, 8, of Muskegon, said while smiling through a red Kool-Aid mustache.

Toys, however, weren't on the preapproved list.

"I like those!" one girl said as she pointed at a rack of adult designer jeans. "But they're too big."

Sue Murar of Muskegon had her hands full shopping with her two sons.

"It's good because I don't have a lot of money," she said of the program. "It will help us a lot."

ADRIAN DAILY TELEGRAM

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Friday, August 31, 2007 12:54 PM EDT

Goodwill “WOW” thanks

To the editor,

Goodwill Industries expresses a special thank you to all who came and enjoyed the great food and Garfield’s Restaurant hospitality at our first Workers On Wheels (WOW) fundraiser on Aug. 14. The event was very successful thanks to our community partners including South Central Michigan Works, **Department of Human Services**, Lenawee Community Mental Health, Michigan Rehabilitation Services, Lenawee Transportation Corporation, Family Counseling and Children Services and WLEN.

WOW, a vehicle donation program, plays a vital role in our community by providing people dependable transportation to work. Goodwill disburses up to 60 vehicles to people each year. The program’s job retention success rate has remained an incredible average of 94 percent since the program inception in 2003.

We thank all our vehicle donors. Donors not only receive a federal and state tax credit, they also get satisfaction of putting a neighbor on the road to selfsufficiency.

Bev Lyell

Adrian Goodwill executive director



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING



MARIANNE UDOW
DIRECTOR

News Release

Contact: Maureen Sorbet or Karen Stock (517) 373-7394

Weatherization grant benefits seniors and infants

Sept. 5, 2007

LANSING – Michigan's seniors and infants will be warmer and safer with the help of a \$335,000 federal energy assistance grant.

The Michigan Department of Human Services was one of two states and four Native American tribes to earn grant funds from the Residential Energy Assistance Challenge Program. These federal funds are set aside to serve the needs of specific groups and are not available for any other purpose. The grant-funded programs will be offered in addition to regular emergency energy and weatherization funding available to low-income Michigan residents.

DHS will select three community agencies to administer the new funds through a program called Michigan Working for Intelligent Safe Energy. The agencies will focus on low-income households that include seniors and infants and provide comprehensive case management and support services to address energy-related health and safety issues. A major goal will be to address lack of heat and unsafe heating that lead to unsafe sleep practices for infants.

"The grant funds make it possible for us to help the most vulnerable individuals who are most likely to be impacted by unsafe heating equipment or homes that have not been weatherized," said Dwayne Haywood, director of DHS' Bureau of Community Action and Economic Opportunity. "We are moving forward to post a Request for Proposals to select eligible community based organizations to initiate this program."

The grant includes up to \$35,000 for administration and evaluation activities, including referrals, utility bill monitoring and reduction in the need for emergency energy relief.

"The more we do to help at risk families keep their energy costs down and promote safe heating practices, the more lives we can improve," Haywood said.

The average American family can spend as much as \$1,300 annual on utility bills, which can represent about 20-40 percent of a low-income family's income. Weatherizing a home can reduce that cost as much as \$300 annually and provide more resources for food, transportation and other necessities resources of family self-sufficiency.

For more information go to www.michigan.gov/dhs or <http://www.michigan.gov/dhs-weatherization>

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JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
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MARIANNE UDOW
DIRECTOR

News Release

Contact: Colleen Steinman or Maureen Sorbet (517) 373-7394

Gov. Granholm declares September as Infant Safe Sleep Month ***Caregivers urged to learn and follow safe sleep guidelines***

Sept. 4, 2007

LANSING – Governor Jennifer M. Granholm has declared September as Infant Safe Sleep Month in Michigan to help stem the growing tide of deaths caused by infants sleeping in unsafe environments.

"A baby's life depends on a safe sleep environment," said Kathyne O'Grady, deputy director of the Michigan Department of Human Services. "Parents, grandparents and day care providers can prevent hundreds of tragedies every year by following simple safe sleep guidelines."

The Michigan Department of Human Services recommends measures to ensure safe sleeping on a new Web site www.michigan.gov/safesleep, including the following:

- Babies should sleep alone in a safety-approved crib with a firm mattress and tightly fitted sheet.
- Babies should sleep on their backs even when they can roll over.
- No soft objects, blankets, bumper pads should be placed in the crib.
- Babies should be kept warm using sleep clothing rather than blankets.
- Babies must sleep in a smoke-free environment.

"Parents throughout Michigan now have the knowledge at their fingertips – Michigan's Safe Sleep guidelines – to prevent tragedy when putting babies to sleep," said Janet Olszewski, director of the Michigan Department of Community Health. "Engaging in proven safe sleep practices contributes to better overall health for infants, ensures a child's great start in life and reduces Michigan's infant mortality rate. We urge all caregivers to follow these guidelines and make bedtime a safe time for our most vulnerable citizens."

The Michigan Child Death State Advisory Team reviewed 253 infant deaths in 2002 and 2003 for sleeping environments. This included 105 Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) deaths, 94 infant suffocations and 54 deaths of undetermined causes. These statistics show that unsafe sleep environments were common in these deaths:

- 84 percent of these infants were not sleeping in cribs.
- 48 percent were in soft or heavy bedding.
- 52 percent were sharing their sleeping space with one or more persons.
- When looking at the SIDS deaths, only 32 percent of the infants were sleeping on their backs.

Officials estimate that a child dies every week in Michigan due to unsafe sleep practices.

-MORE-

Recently, Wayne County officials reported that five babies died in just two days in July while sleeping in their parents' beds. Wayne County officials estimate that as many as 30 infants have died in their county since January of 2007 due to unsafe sleep practices. In 2006, 50 such deaths occurred in Wayne County and, in 2005, the total was 44.

"These are not just statistics," said Sandra Frank, executive director of Tomorrow's Child. "A baby's death absolutely devastates the family, and the loss to the community is immeasurable."

Along with the Web site, instructional DVDs, posters, brochures and public service announcements are being used to educate parents and caregivers. An interagency team, including Tomorrow's Child, the Michigan Public Health Institute and the state departments of Human Services, Community Health and Education, has pooled resources to help stem the growing number of infant deaths.

"Michigan is fortunate to have many public and private partners at both the state and local levels working together to protect children," state Superintendent of Public Instruction Mike Flanagan said. "Through these partnerships, lasting differences can be made in the lives of children and families."

For more information go to www.michigan.gov/dhs or www.michigan.gov/safesleep

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